

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name D.G. Smith Building

other names/site number 041-0020-0031

2. Location

street & number 217 West First Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Abilene ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Dickinson code 041 zip code 67410

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



D-SHPO June 23, 1995

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

D.G. Smith Building

Name of Property

Dickinson County, Kansas

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

c. 1885-1945

Significant Dates

c. 1885-, 1895, 1945

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Rec _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society
Dickinson County Historical Society

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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The D. G. Smith Building (c. 1885) is located at 217 West First Street in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas (pop. 6,242). The two story, red brick building sits on a limestone foundation and is surmounted by a composition flat roof. The building has a northern facade orientation with overall measurements of approximately twenty-six feet east to west and seventy-six feet north to south.

The D. G. Smith Building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block store. The building stands at the corner of First and Cedar Streets. The brick store contains restrained elements of the Italianate style. The building's Italianate style is interpreted through its rectangular form, arched windows on the second floor, and bracketed entablature. The first and second floors reflect their different internal uses. The single-story lower floor, at street level, indicates public space as a retail store. The upper floor is an apartment, a private space.

The exterior of the store is constructed of brick. Wooden arches surmount the windows on the facade and first bay of the west elevation. The rest of the windows on the west elevation are surmounted by brick arches with limestone keystones and imposts. Brick arches surmount the windows on the south elevation. Limestone thresholds underscore all windows, except the two located on the east elevation. Three chimneys rise from the west side of the composition roof.

The facade of the store reflects the differences in inside use. The first floor is composed of large windows and a door, all surmounted by transoms. The exterior corners are composed of square steel columns that rise to the second floor. The recessed entrance is marked with steel columns. The second story, where the ornamentation occurs, is composed of three 2/2 double hung sash windows surmounted by wooden arches. Limestone blocks define the corners of the second story. A wooden entablature is located on the facade. The frieze is decorated with dentils. Four brackets uphold the eaves. A gable with "D. G. SMITH. 1885" painted in black is centered on the entablature.

An engraving in the 1887 First National Bank promotional titled "A Gem, The City of the Plains, Abilene" indicates that the words "MUSIC HALL" might have been painted on the brick below the entablature. There is no indication, though, that a music hall ever existed above the pharmacy. The engraving also indicates that the word "DRUGGIST" might have appeared in the gable below the present inscription and the words "PRESCRIPTION" and "A SPECIALTY" were painted on either side of the gable.

The composition of the first bay of the west elevation is similar to the facade. A large multi-light window pierces the first story while the second story is pierced by a 2/2 double hung sash window surmounted by a wooden arch. The end of the first bay is marked with a square steel column on the first floor and limestone blocks on the second. The brick entablature, covering the west and south elevations, reflects a different composition than the facade entablature. The entablature is defined with dentils that are broken with slightly projecting brick brackets.

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wall in the east bedroom and den.

The D. G. Smith Building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block store. The present owners, Richard Esvang and Michelle Meade, plan to transform the downstairs into a vintage clothing museum with an espresso/coffee bar on the mezzanine. They currently live in the apartment above the store that was remodelled in 1994. The 1994 remodelling of the apartment returned the floorplan, as closely as could be determined, to its original design. The two bay layout is separated by an east/west hallway. The public rooms are located to the south and contain a combined dining/living room and kitchen. A den, two bedrooms, and a bathroom are located north of the hallway and comprise the private areas of the apartment.

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The D. G. Smith Building (c. 1885) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion A for its historical association with the growth and development of Abilene, Kansas and under criterion C for its architectural significance as a late nineteenth century commercial building. The D. G. Smith Building represents the settlement growth of Abilene, after the cattle trade left.

The D. G. Smith Building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block store. The building stands at the corner of First and Cedar Streets. The brick store contains restrained elements of the Italianate style. The building's Italianate style is interpreted through its rectangular form, arched windows on the second floor, and bracketed cornice. The first and second floor reflect their different internal uses. The single-story lower floor, at street level, indicates public space as a retail store. The upper floor is an apartment, a private space.

"Town building preoccupied a large portion of the westward-moving populace. Many Americans shared the dream that their own communities would one day emerge as great urban centers. The size and extant of a community's commercial buildings served as an index to its achievements and its potential. Even in the frontier town, many of the earliest and finest permanent buildings were erected to house those commercial enterprises. Businesses were intentionally clustered in more or less central districts....The individuality of the emporiums, offices, banks, hotels and theaters that made up these areas was important to their collective image." (Longstreth, p.13)

The architect of the D. G. Smith Building is unknown, but three architects are named in the 1886 Dickinson County Directory. The three possible architects that could have designed the building are John C. Cristy, Paul & Jacobs, and Thompson & Kruger; all located in Abilene. Family lore implies that an architect designed the building, but D. G. Smith was actively involved in the planning and construction of the building.

The D. G. Smith Building, situated along the once bustling Texas Street, integrated itself into the community by supplying needed goods to the town. As the population changed from cattle men to settlers, the D. G. Smith Building became a representation of growing commercial enterprises in a flourishing community. In 1895, the building was converted from a pharmacy into a grocery and dry goods store.

On September 3, 1869, Abilene was incorporated. Abilene's reputation as the "wickedest and wildest town in the west developed as it grew, almost overnight, into a town of 3,000 during the boom era of 1867-1872. During those few years, over three million Texas Longhorn cattle arrived at the terminus of the Chisholm Trail, making Abilene the first cowtown of the west. Abilene was originally laid out along Texas Street, the first street in Abilene. Texas Street stretched east to Cedar then jogged north a short distance and then turned east again to Buckeye.

The increase of settlers coming to Abilene can partly be contributed to the large number of advertisements in eastern papers. "Abilene was the best advertised small town in the United States

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Nusz operated grocery and dry goods store until 1945. In addition to running his store, Nusz was also active in local politics. "Nusz was one of the first city commissioners to be elected here under the city management plan and served two terms as mayor, in 1941 and again in 1944. He was a member of the city commission for six years." (Abilene Reflector-Chronicle, July 15, 1955)

The D. G. Smith Building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block store. The building stands at the corner of First and Cedar Street. First Street was originally Texas Street, the first street in Abilene. The present owners, Richard Esvang and Michelle Meade, plan to transform the downstairs into a vintage clothing museum with a espresso/coffee bar. They currently live in the apartment above the store.

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abilene Reflector Chronicle, 1 January 1885, 17 November 1885, 27 February 1945, 19 March 1947, 15 July 1955.

Jameson, Henry B. Heros by the Dozen. Abilene: Shadinger-Wilson Printers, 1961.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street. Washington D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1987.

Meade, Michelle. "D. G. Smith Building." National Register nomination draft, 1994.

Past and Present, Progress and Prosperity. Abilene: 1910.

Salina Journal, 1 July 1956.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property stands on the west 1/2 of Lots 8 in Block 2, Original Town. The property is bounded to the north by First Street, to the west by Cedar Street, to the south by an alley and to the east by adjacent property lines.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains all property historically associated with the nominated building.

D. G. Smith Building 55'
 Abilene Quadrangle
 UTM Coordinates
 14 654528 4308620

